

ROYAL SOCIETY, 1894.

APRIL.

The 1894 session of the Royal Society was inaugurated on Monday, April 9. The President, His Excellency Lord Gormanston, presided. His Excellency formally welcomed Dr. E. E. Mobeek (Sweden), Surgeon V. G. Thorpe, F.R.M.S (H.M.S. Penguin), and Rev. T. Robjohns (Sydney), who were introduced by the Secretary (Mr. A. Morton).

THE GOTHENBERG SYSTEM.

The BISHOP OF TASMANIA read a paper on "The Gothenberg System," communicated by Mr. Russell Macnaughten. The writer explained that the Gothenberg system was co-operation applied to licensing. The state or municipality, acting through a company, bound by certain conditions, set in the place of the publican (in licensed houses owned and managed by the company) officials receiving a fixed yearly salary with a bonus derived not from the alcohol, but from the food and non-alcoholic beverages they might be able to sell. This principle was of paramount importance. The inducement to push the sale of alcoholic liquor was stopped, because the publican was no longer anything but a salaried servant, and because the bonus he received was entirely dependent on the food and non-alcoholic beverages sold. In fact it became his interest to push their sale as far as possible to the exclusion of alcohol, the demand for which was no longer stimulated by any artificial pressure on the part of the publican. The movement that resulted in the establishment of the Gothenberg system began in 1862. The Dean of Gothenberg took a prominent part, and, mainly owing to his exertions, a committee was appointed to investigate the reasons of pauperism and misery at that time very prevalent amongst the poorer classes of the town. The committee decided that it was "to brandy, and brandy alone," most of the sufferings of the working classes were due. A company was almost immediately formed to take over the existing licences of the town on the following conditions:—(1) That the amount of profit to be made by the shareholders should be limited to 6 per cent.; (2) the payment of managers by salary and commission on food and non-intoxicants; (3) satisfactory accommodation for the public as regards the situation, size, space, food, etc., of all the houses belonging to the company; (4) all the profits above 6 per cent. to be handed over to the municipality. The company reduced the 60 licences in existence to 43, one for every 1,093 inhabitants. The writer gave his experience in Gothenberg in 1888, where, in the week before Christmas, when the peasantry from the surrounding country districts poured into the town, and although it was market day, he did not see a single drunken man. The company's monopoly applied to spirits only, brandy being the favourite intoxicating beverage. The British Minister's report, drawn up specially for the British Government, entered a verdict, after a careful and unprejudiced observation, distinctly favourable to the system as a whole, special attention being called to the fact that both the consumption of spirits and the cases of *delirium tremens* treated in the hospitals showed a marked decrease.

Dr. MOBEEK said he had always heard that Tasmania kept in the front line of civilisation. He could not understand why England had not yet accepted the Gothenberg system, and eulogistically testified to its beneficial operation in the town in Sweden where he had lived for 35 years.

Mr. JAMES BARNARD characterised the paper as very interesting, and said that the Gothenberg system appeared to have solved the problem of the existence of public-houses with the well-being of society.

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. Adye Douglas) did not see where the good of the system came in. We had not in all Tasmania *delirium tremens* to the same extent it seemed to exist in Gothenberg. Day after day they could go round the city of Hobart and not only not expect to meet a lot of drunken people, but intoxicated people were not often met with. The writer appeared to have gone to Gothenberg and expected to meet a lot of drunken people, and did not. A few years ago a few drunken people might have been met with in Tasmania, but now we were a decidedly sober people. Why should not a public-house be the same as any other house, properly decorated and properly adjusted for the reception of people? Although the houses professed to sell bread in Gothenberg, they were really nothing but drinking places. It was the liquor that brought the profit. Increased sobriety was due to the progress of temperance principles throughout the world. So far as the Gothenberg system was described in the paper, he did not see any advantages in it.

Mr. A. J. TAYLOR thought the introduction of the system would confer a lasting benefit on the community.

Hon. C. H. GRANT, M.L.C., said that in Gothenberg it seemed to him the system was applied to a different set of circumstances, climatic and otherwise, than what prevailed in English speaking communities.

The PRESIDENT said he was not prepared to give any opinion on the question, not having studied it. Two points struck him. It would be a very pleasant thing to have the duty on wine in this colony reduced. Something was to be said for the Gothenberg system, which allowed a municipality to make money out of it, for if a little more money were spent on the streets of Hobart—(but more he would not say.

TASMAN'S TRACKS.

Mr. A. MAULT read a lengthy note on a MS. chart in the British Museum, showing Tasman's tracks in the voyage of 1642-4, and presented *fac-simile* copies of the original chart to the Society for reproduction in its "Proceedings."

Mr. J. B. WALKER said that the Society was indebted to Mr. Mault for his paper. After some remarks on the subject, Mr. Walker said he understood that a portrait of Tasman was on the way out to the Exhibition, and that if it were authentic and original it would be a pity to allow it to leave the colony, for if any part of the world ought to revere the name of Tasman surely it was the colony named after him.

TASMANIAN CHITONS.

A paper on "Some Tasmanian Chitons," by Mr. W. F. Bednall, Corresponding Member (Adelaide), was read.

RIVER OUSE FOSSIL IMPRESSIONS.

Rev. C. W. H. DICKER, with a view to drawing attention to what he believed to be some fossil impressions in the bed of the River Ouse, read an interesting paper on the subject.

The SECRETARY thought the specimens exhibited were more likely to be water ripples than fossil impressions.

Mr. JAMES RULE reminded the writer of the presence of she-oak trees in the neighbourhood.

A NEW SPECIES OF PEDALION.

Surgeon THORPE read some notes on a new species of Pedalion found in the Solomon Islands, and exhibited some microscopical specimens.

The PRESIDENT thanked the contributors of papers, and the proceedings terminated.